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Dutch inquiry into leak of secret US message

From Sue Masterman
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Mr Max van der Stoep, the Dutch Foreign Minister, today ordered an investigation into the leaking of a secret diplomatic telegram outlining a new United States policy aimed at dividing the poorest Third World countries, and the oil producers.

The existence of the telegram was disclosed at an international conference in Amsterdam this week.

The telegram, outlining the contents of a message received by The Hague from the United States Government last week, was sent for information to Dutch ambassadors and the delegation involved in the North-South dialogue in Paris between the industrial and the developing countries.

The text of the Dutch telegram was leaked at the fifteenth annual congress in Amsterdam this week of the Society for International Development, being attended by 2,000 delegates from 100 countries.

One of the sponsors of the congress is the Dutch Ministry of Development Aid, whose Minister, Mr Jan Pronk, is at daggers drawn with Mr van der Stoep over the North-South dialogue.

Mr Pronk has stated that the dialogue is doomed to failure, while Mr van der Stoep, the present president of the EEC

Council of Foreign Ministers, is more optimistic.

The Washington message appears to have stated that the American Administration considers it has been successful in trying to put a brake on the attempt by the poorest Third World countries to influence the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

The United States fears, however, that the present Opec strategy coupling the size of the rise in the oil price to the progress of the North-South dialogue would neutralize this success. The new policy is thus directed towards undermining this relationship.

At the Amsterdam congress various speakers, including Mr Abdel Rahman Khane, outgoing Opec secretary-general, have said that Opec must switch its investments from the Western industrialized countries to the developing countries.

The American move appears to be designed to forestall this development.

Mr van der Stoep, who has not attempted to deny the contents of the telegram, will confront Mr Pronk tomorrow at the regular weekly Cabinet meeting.

Mr van der Stoep is reported to regard the leak as a direct attack on the Foreign Affairs Ministry by the Ministry of Development Aid. Only those two departments were aware of the existence of the telegram.